

APUSH – Defending Slavery

DOCUMENT PACKET: DEFENDING SLAVERY

Perhaps not surprisingly, as Northern opposition to slavery increased, Southerners who supported the institution began to launch a more aggressive and passionate defense of their labor system and way of life. Over time, the pro-slavery argument gradually evolved from the position that slavery was a necessary evil to the stance that it was actually a positive good. As you examine the following documents, try to identify and evaluate the specific strategy or strategies that the writers use to defend slavery. You should use the discussion questions listed below to guide your analysis. Be prepared to share your answers to these questions with the rest of the class.

Documents A & B - The Character and Condition of the "Negro"

He the Negro is but a grown up child, and must be governed as a child, not as a lunatic or criminal. The master occupies toward him the place of parent or guardian. We shall not dwell on this view, for no one will differ with us who thinks as we do of the Negro's capacity, and we might argue till dooms day in vain, with those who have a high opinion of the Negro's moral and intellectual capacity.

Secondly. The Negro is [irresponsible]; will not [save] in summer for the wants of winter; will not accumulate in youth for the [demands or needs] of age. He would become an insufferable burden to society. Society has the right to prevent this, and can only do so by subjecting him to domestic slavery. In the last place, the Negro race is inferior to the white race, and living in their midst, they would be far outstripped or outwitted in the chaos of free competition. Gradual but certain extermination would be their fate. We presume the maddest abolitionist does not think the Negro's providence of habits and money-making capacity at all to compare to those of the whites. This defect of character would alone justify enslaving him, if he is to remain here. In Africa or the West Indies, he would become idolatrous, savage and cannibal, or be devoured by savages and cannibals. At the North he would freeze or starve.

Source: Fitzhugh, George. *Sociology for the South; or, The failure of a free society* (Richmond, Va., A. Morris, 1854).

Document B

The Negro slaves of the South are the happiest, and, in some sense, the freest people in the world. The children and the aged and infirm work not at all, and yet have all the comforts and necessities of life provided for them. They enjoy liberty, because they are oppressed neither by care nor labor. The women do little hard work, and are protected from the despotism [tyranny] of their husbands by their masters. The Negro men and boys work, on the average, in good weather, not more than nine hours a day. The balance of their time is spent in perfect abandon. Besides' they have their Sabbaths and holidays. White men, with so much of license and liberty, would die of [boredom]; but Negroes luxuriate in [physical] and mental repose. With their faces upturned to the sun, they can sleep at any hour; and quiet sleep is the greatest of human enjoyments.

Source: Fitzhugh, George. *Cannibals All! Or, Slaves Without Masters* (Richmond, Va.: A. Morris, 1857).

Document C - "At the South"

"Now den Julius! If yer ain't a good litte n____r, mudder'l call de big ole Bobolitionist and let um run away wid yer."

Source: Day, B. (Engraver). "At the South." *Harper's Weekly* (1860, January 28), p.64.



AT THE SOUTH.

"Now den Julius! If yer ain't a good litte ni____r, mudder'l call de big ole Bobolitionist and let um run away wid yer."

Document D - The "Mud-Sill" Theory

Excerpt from Senator James Hammond (South Carolina) speech to the U.S. Senate, March 4, 1858.

In all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is, a class requiring but a low order of intellect and but little skill. Its requisites are vigor, docility, fidelity. Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, civilization, and refinement. It constitutes the very mud-sill [or foundation] of society and of political government; and you might as well attempt to build a house in the air, as to build either the one or the other [without] this mud-sill. Fortunately for the South, she found a race adapted to that purpose to her hand. A race inferior to her own, but eminently qualified in temper, in vigor, in docility, in capacity to stand the climate, to answer all her purposes. We use them for our purpose, and call them slaves.

The Senator from New York said yesterday that the whole world has abolished slavery. Aye, the name, but not the thing; all the powers of the earth cannot abolish that. God only can do it when he repeals the [law], "the poor ye always have with you;" for the man who lives by daily labor, and scarcely lives at that, and who has to put out his labor in the market, and take the best he can get for it; in short, your whole hireling class of manual laborers and "operatives," as you call them, are essentially slaves. The difference between us is that our slaves are hired for life and well compensated; there is no starvation, no begging, and no want of employment among our people. Yours are hired by the day, not cared for, and scantily compensated, which may be proved in the most painful manner, at any hour in any street in any of your large towns. Why, you meet more beggars in one day, in any single street of the city of New York, than you would meet in a lifetime in the whole South.

We do not think that whites should be slaves either by law or necessity. Our slaves are black, of another and inferior race. The status in which we have placed them is an elevation. They are elevated from the condition in which God first created them by being made our slaves. None of that race on the whole face of the globe can be compared with the slaves of the South. They are happy, content, unaspiring, and utterly incapable, from intellectual weakness, ever to give us any trouble by their aspirations. Yours are white, of your own race; you are brothers of one blood. They are your equals in natural endowment of intellect, and they feel galled by their degradation. Our slaves do not vote. We give them no political power. Yours do vote, and, being the majority, they are the depositories of all your political power. If they knew the tremendous secret, that the ballot-box is stronger than "an army with banners," and could combine, where would you be? Your society would be reconstructed, your government overthrown, your property divided, not as they have mistakenly attempted to initiate such proceedings by meeting in parks, with arms in their hands, but by the quiet process of the ballot-box. You have been making war upon us to our very hearthstones. How would you like for us to send lecturers and agitators north, to teach these people this, to aid in combining, and to lead them?

Source: Hammond, James Henry. *Speech of Hon. James H. Hammond, of South Carolina, on the admission of Kansas, under the Lecompton Constitution: delivered in the Senate of the United States, March 4, 1858.* [S.l.: s.n., 1858]

Document E - "Slavery as it Exists in America. Slavery as it Exists in England"

Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
<<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3a05113>>



The first scene takes place on an American plantation, where four white men (two Southerners and two Northerners) watch the slaves dance and play. One of the Southerners remarks: "It is a general thing, some few exceptions, after mine have done a certain amount of labor, which they finish by 4 or 5 P.M., I allow them to enjoy themselves in any reasonable way." The second scene takes place at a British textile factory. "I say Bill," one barefoot youth says to another, "I am going to run away from the factory and go to the coal mines where they have to work only 14 hours a Day instead of 17 as you do here." Behind them, an impoverished mother laments about life in the factory: "Oh Dear! What wretched Slaves, this Factory Life makes me & my children."

Document F- Slavery and the Threat of Violence

(Note: The following documents refer to Nat Turner's insurrection and John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry.)

Nat Turner's Rebellion: Excerpt from a Richmond (Virginia) *Constitutional Whig* of August 29, 1831:

Disagreeable rumors have reached this city of an insurrection of the slaves in Southampton County, with loss of life. In order to correct exaggerations, and at the same time to induce all salutary caution, we state the following particulars.

An express from the Hon. James Trezevant states that an insurrection had broken out, that several families had been murdered, and that the Negroes were embodied, requiring a considerable military force to reduce them....

Serious danger, of course, there is none. The deluded wretches have rushed on assured destruction....

We understand that the insurrection in Southampton is little more than the irruption of 150 or 200 runaway slaves from the Dismal Swamp, incited by a spirit of plunder and rapine. It will be quickly suppressed.

Source: Digital History. (2004). Nat Turner's insurrection. Retrieved August 16, 2004, from http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/documents/documents_p2.cfm?doc=75.

Document G - "Danger of Insurrection"

Source: (1859 November 29). *The Staunton Spectator*, p. 2

While the crazy fanatics of the North imagine that the poor negro, smarting under a galling sense of his degradation, and inspired by a noble impulse of resistance to tyranny, is ready at a moment's warning to grasp the murderous pike and fight for his freedom, the people of the South feel the most perfect security in the full assurance that they possess not only the willing obedience but the strong attachment of their slaves. It is a most egregious blunder to suppose that we who live in the enjoyment of all the benefits of the "peculiar institution," live also in constant dread of insurrection and rebellion, and go to our beds at night with the terrible apprehension that our throats may be cut before morning. Not a bit of it. We sleep as soundly and sweetly as though we were surrounded by an armed body guard of chosen defenders, in the confident belief that our ebony friends will not feel the slightest disposition to "rise". . .

The state of public feeling at present establishes the fact that no apprehension of danger from servile insurrection is felt by the people of the South. The danger is apprehended outside of the State, from the insane crew who entertain such unfounded opinions in regard to the condition of the slaves, and their disposition to free themselves from bondage. In the prospect of further invasion of our State for the purpose of rescuing those who have already stained its soil with blood, we see the people of Virginia leaving their wives and children in the hands of their faithful domestics, and repairing to the borders of Virginia, far away from their homes, to repel the insolent foe. They leave their families behind without an apprehension of danger from those who are supposed at the North to be ready to massacre them at the first favorable opportunity. . .

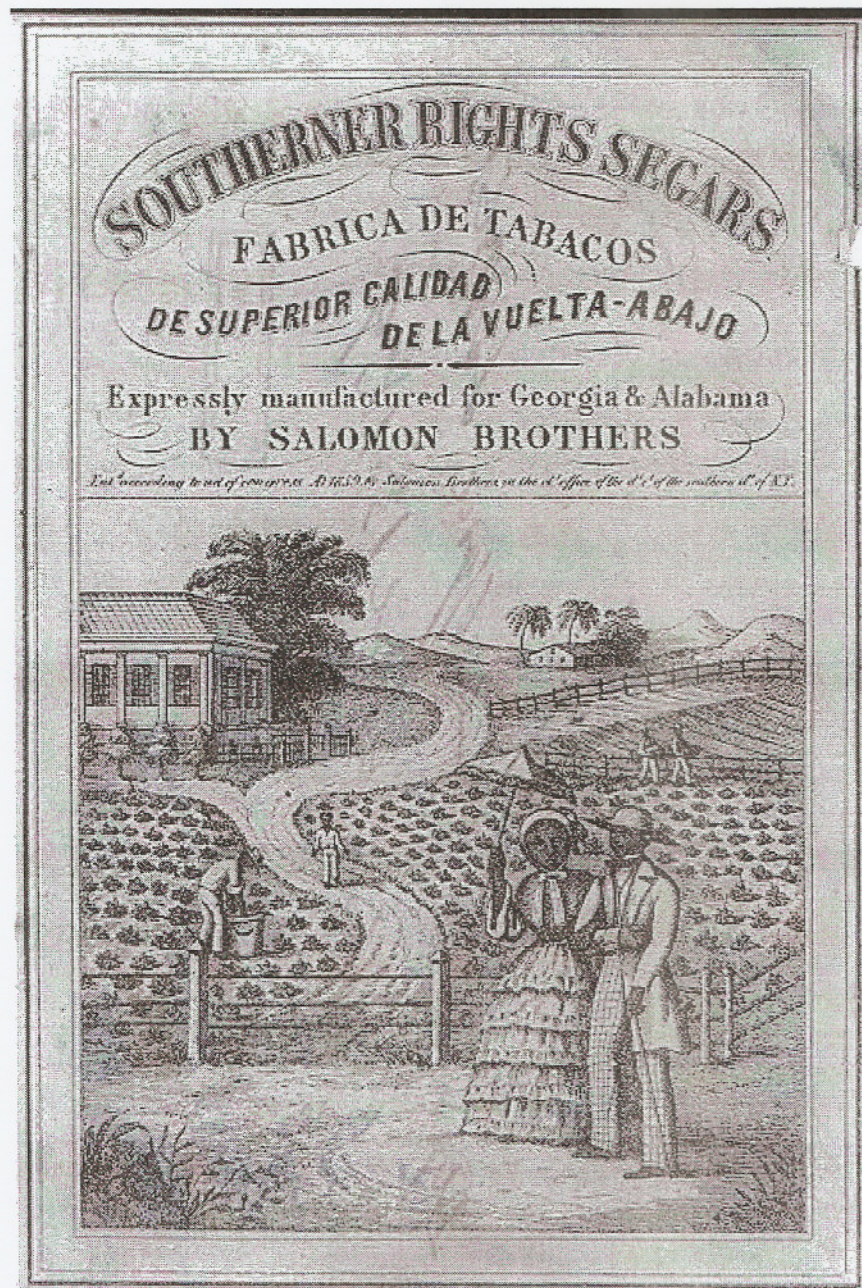
Source: <<http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/teaching/vclassroom/proslavewsht1.html>>

Document H - "Southerner Rights Segars"

The New York firm Salomon Brothers used this image to market their cigars to smokers in states like Georgia and Alabama. The couple in the foreground is strolling in front of a prosperous tobacco plantation.

Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

<<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3a17754>>



Document I - The Biblical Defense of Slavery

"Holy Abraham"

If your definition of slavery is correct, holy Abraham lived all his life in the commission of one of the most aggravated crimes against God and man which can be conceived. And God not only connived at this appalling iniquity, but, in the covenant made with Abraham, expressly mentions it and confirms the patriarch in it. Why, at the very first blush, every Christian will cry out against this statement.

Source: Bledsoe, Albert Taylor. *An Essay on Liberty and Slavery* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1856). The entire essay is available online at: <http://www.bible-researcher.com/bledsoe-slavery.html>.

Document J - Both by Precept and by Example: Richard Furman

The right of holding slaves is clearly established by the Holy Scriptures, both by precept (law) and example. In the Old Testament, the Israelites were directed to purchase their bond-men and bond-maids (male and female slaves) of the Heathen nations. And it is declared, that the persons purchased were to be their "bond-men forever;" and an "inheritance for them and their children." [See Leviticus XXV. 44, 45, 46, &c]. In example, they are presented to our view as existing in the families of the Hebrews as servants, or slaves, born in the house, or bought with money: so that the children born of slaves are here considered slaves as well as their parents.

Under both [the Greek and Roman] empires, the countries they possessed and governed were full of slaves. Many of these with their masters, were converted to the Christian Faith, and received, together with them into the Christian Church, while it was yet under the ministry of the inspired Apostles. Had the holding of slaves been a moral evil, it cannot be supposed, that the inspired Apostles, who feared not the faces of men and were ready to lay down their lives in the cause of their God, would have tolerated it for a moment in the Christian Church. If they had done so on the principle of accommodation, in cases where the masters remained heathen, to avoid offences and civil commotion, [that would be one thing]. Yet, surely, where both master and servant were Christian, as in the case before us, they would have enforced the law of Christ, and required the master to [immediately] liberate his slave. But, instead of this, they let the relationship remain untouched, as being lawful and right, and insist on the relative duties.

In proving this subject justifiable by Scriptural authority, its morality is also proved; for the Divine Law never sanctions immoral actions.

Source: Furman, R. *Exposition of the views of the Baptists relative to the coloured population in the United States in communication to the Governor of South-Carolina*. (Charleston: Printed by A.E. Miller, 1838).

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 shattered the uneasy sectional truce. Senator Stephen Arnold Douglas of Illinois—a bouncy, stumpy real estate booster and transcontinental railroad enthusiast—undertook to organize Nebraska into a territory. Hoping to enlist southern support, he held out the bait of making Kansas a slave state by the operation of "squatter" or "popular" sovereignty. In short, he would let the people of the territories themselves democratically decide whether they wanted slaves or no slaves. But this meant an outright repeal, by means of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, of the time-hallowed Compromise of 1820—the compromise that had banned slavery in the Louisiana Purchase territory north of 36° 30. Whatever his motives, Douglas infuriated northern abolitionists and free-soilers by driving the Kansas-Nebraska Bill through the Senate with relentless energy. In this portion of his Senate speech, how does he define the merits of "popular sovereignty"?

... When the people of the North shall all be rallied under one banner, and the whole South marshaled under another banner, and each section excited to frenzy and madness by hostility to the institutions of the other, then the patriot may well tremble for the perpetuity of the Union. Withdraw the slavery question from the political arena, and remove it to the states and territories, each to decide for itself, such a catastrophe can never happen. Then you will never be able to tell, by any Senator's vote for or against any measure, from what state or section of the Union he comes.

Why, then, can we not withdraw this vexed question from politics? Why can we not adopt the [popular sovereignty] principle of this [Kansas-Nebraska] bill as a rule of action in all new territorial organizations? Why can we not deprive these agitators of their vocation, and render it impossible for Senators to come here upon bargains on the slavery question? I believe that the peace, the harmony, and perpetuity of the Union require us to go back to the doctrines of the Revolution, to the principles of the Constitution, to the principles of the Compromise of 1850, and leave the people, under the Constitution, to do as they may see proper in respect to their own internal affairs.

Mr. President, I have not brought this question forward as a Northern man or as a Southern man. I am unwilling to recognize such divisions and distinctions. I have brought it forward as an American Senator, representing a state which is true to this principle, and which has approved of my action in respect to the Nebraska bill. I have brought it forward not as an act of justice to the South more than to the North. I have presented it especially as an act of justice to the people of those territories, and of the states to be formed therefrom, now and in all time to come.

I have nothing to say about Northern rights or Southern rights. I know of no such divisions or distinctions under the Constitution. The bill does equal and exact justice to the whole Union, and every part of it; it violates the rights of no state or territory, but places each on a perfect equality, and leaves the people thereof to the free enjoyment of all their rights under the Constitution

I say frankly that, in my opinion, this measure will be as popular at the North as at the South, when its provisions and principles shall have been fully developed and become well understood.

Congressional Globe, 33d Congress, 1st session (March 3, 1854), Appendix, p. 338.

Discussion Questions

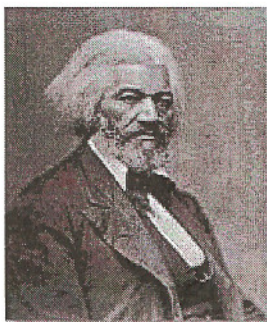
Please answer the following questions for each document:

1. What is the purpose of this document? Who is the writer's intended audience? How might these features influence the work?
 2. What does the writer of this document want us to know? How credible is his or her message?
 3. How are various groups of people portrayed in this document? Whose views are excluded or privileged?
 4. In whose interest is this document?
 5. If you were an African American living in the nineteenth century, how do you think you would have reacted to this document? How would you have reacted if you were a white northerner? A white southerner?
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Additional Resources:

- Slavery in America:
<http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/scripts/sia/gallery.cgi?collection=politicsdefense>>
- Fishel, L.H., Jr., & Quarles, B. (1976). *The Black American: A Documentary History* (3rd ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, and Company.
- Digital History: < <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/>>
- The complete text of James Hammond's speech: <[Hammond.pdf](#)>
- The complete text of Albert Taylor Bledsoe's *An Essay on Liberty and Slavery*:
<<http://www.bible-researcher.com/bledsoe-slavery.html>>
- The complete text of Richard Furman's
Exposition:<<http://alpha.furman.edu/~benson/docs/rcd-fmn1.htm>>

Activity Sheet: Poking Holes in the Pro-Slavery Argument



Introduction

Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave and dedicated abolitionist, was one of the most respected reformers and orators of his age. By all accounts, he was an immediate and huge success on the lecture circuit, routinely captivating audiences with his intelligence, wit, and flair for the dramatic. "I appear before you this evening as a thief and a robber," he would begin. "I stole this head, these limbs, this body from my master and ran off with them." In 1845, Douglass published the first of three bestselling autobiographies, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, in which he paints a particularly damning portrait of slavery. Two years later, he purchased his freedom from his Maryland owner and founded the antislavery newspaper, the *North Star* (later renamed *Frederick Douglass' Paper* and then finally *Douglass' Monthly*), in Rochester, NY. As an editor and journalist, Douglass worked ceaselessly on behalf of free blacks and slaves, demanding their right to full social and economic equality.

Directions

The year is 1858 and the slaveholder James Hammond has just delivered his famous "Mud-Sill" speech to members of the United States Senate. As the editor-in-chief of a leading abolitionist newspaper, Frederick Douglass is constantly on the lookout for talented young writers who oppose slavery. Submit an opinion piece to Douglass countering the arguments that Hammond uses to defend slavery. Your article should be at least two pages long (typed, 12 font Arial, double-spaced, standard margins) and should contain references to Hammond's speech. You may use your document packets from our lesson on the conditions of slavery to find evidence to support your arguments.

DBQ Graphic Organizer

Thesis Statement (developed from

Task): _____

BODY PARAGRAPHS: (There should be 1 box for each task/reason)

Details/examples from the document and Analysis

Outside Information

Details/examples from the document and Analysis

Outside Information

Details/examples from the document and Analysis

Outside Information

Restate the Thesis Statement

: _____

CONCLUSION: (RESTATE the thesis & information from introduction to end your essay.)

Double-Entry Journal

Idea from Text:

Reaction/Connection:

Essential Question

❖ The BIG IDEA:

How did Southerners Defend Slavery?

● **Pennsylvania Department of Education Academic Standards-Geography-History-Speaking & Listening Standards - 7.3 The Human Characteristics of Places & Regions - 7.4 The Interactions Between People & Places - 7.2.3A Identify the physical characteristics of places & regions - 7.2.6A Identify & evaluate the political & cultural contributions of individuals & groups to world history - 1.6 Speaking & Listening - 1.3 Reading, Analyzing, & Interpreting Literature -- Civics & Government 5.3: Students will examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare -- Civics & Government 5.1, 5.2: Students will analyze and evaluate the influence of various forms of citizen action on public policy -- Civics & Government 5.1, 5.2: Students will evaluate the effectiveness of public opinion in influencing and shaping public policy development and decision-making -- Civics & Government 5.2: Students will construct a policy statement and an action plan to achieve one or more goals related to an issue of public concern.**

❖ **PA COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

❖ **Writing in History and Social Studies**

❖ **8.6 Writing - Students write for different purposes and audiences. Students write clear and focused text to convey a well-defined perspective and appropriate content.**

❖ **PA COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

❖ **(GRADES 6 - 12) Reading in History and Social Studies**

❖ **8.5 Reading Informational Text**

❖ **Students read, understand, and respond to informational text – with emphasis on comprehension, making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence.**

What To Do?

**How did Southerners Defend
Slavery?**

**Now you've read the documents
Divide into groups**

Answer the questions

Come back together

Make a point

Best point-makers get a prize

Let's look ahead

Questions For You All

- ◆ **What is the purpose of this document? Who is the writer's intended audience? How might these features influence the work?**
- ◆ **What does the writer of this document want us to know? How credible is his or her message?**
- ◆ **How are various groups of people portrayed in this document? Whose views are excluded or privileged?**
- ◆ **In whose interest is this document? POV**
- ◆ **If you were an African American living in the nineteenth century, how do you think you would have reacted to this document? How would you have reacted if you were a white northerner? A white southerner?**

Teams:

Dan, Brandon, Marta, & Lauren
Julie, Teddy, Ethan, & Leroy
Lincoln, Cody, Del, & Briann

Your Jobs

- *Facilitator*: Makes sure that everyone participates, does not allow group members to insult one another, makes sure that the group finishes on time, and contributes to the group's discussion. Remind students that the facilitator is not the leader.
- *Teacher Liaison*: If the group has a question or is experiencing difficulty with the task, the liaison should raise his or her hand and ask the teacher to come over. The liaison should also contribute to the group's discussion.
- *Recorder*: Notes key points under discussion, records the group's answers to the discussion questions, and contributes to the group's discussion.
- *Reporter*: Shares the group's answers with the rest of the class and contributes to the group's discussion.